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Germany (Soviet Zone)

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COUNTRY

Germany (Soviet Zone)

REPORT NO.

TOPIC

Mersburg Airfield

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EVALUATION

DATE OF CONT

DATE OBTAINED

REFERENCES

PAGES

2

ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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- During the period from 1 to 7 August 1951, the six barracks buildings at Mersburg airfield were completely repaired and surrounded by a wire fence 2 meters high. The former general's billets, the officers' club, and the officers' billets quartered a unit of about 120 men wearing red-bordered black epaulets.

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- The surfaced runway was completed. Source determined that the runway was 2,200 meters long and 57.9 meters wide. (1) The E-W runway slopes about 2.5 meters at each end. The middle of the runway was slightly arched. Several construction workers stated that the ground was excavated 60 cm deep for the runway. A layer of 10 cm of gravel was rolled to about 30 cm thick. This layer was topped by a 30-cm layer of concrete (2) A uniform mixture of concrete was used for the whole runway. (3) The joints between the individual sections of the surface were filled with tar. Power-shovels and concrete mixing machines were still standing on the runway.
- A taxiway was being built 400 meters south of the runway and parallel to it. The taxiway is connected with the runway by two lanes, each about 10 meters wide in its western section. On 8 September, the taxiway was completed except for a section on its western end. The surface of the taxiway consisted of 3.6 x 6 meters slabs, separated by joints 2 cm wide. According to a construction supervisor, the taxiway was constructed the same way as the runway.
- In its western part, the taxiway crosses two concrete underground foundations, of which the western one was completed on 8 September, while the other one was only staked off. The completed foundations were about 25 x 4 x 3 meters. The floor and the sides were concrete, about 70 cm thick. Five pipes running from north to south and about 3 meters deep were seen in the foundations. Three of the cast iron pipes were 25 cm and two 15 cm in diameter. These pipes were laid in the direction of the western end of the runway and toward the target range. (4)
- The drainage system runs along the northern edge of the runway. It consists of two parallel brick walls supporting concrete rungs, 30 cm long, 5 cm wide, and 15 cm thick. The concrete pipes were installed below these rungs which were 5 cm apart.

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6. Gravel, cement, sand, and pipes continued to arrive at the field. The gravel dump was 8 to 10 meters high in certain places and 500 to 600 meters long. A power shovel was used for the purpose of clearing the second railroad track north of the dump of gravel. About 1,000 pieces of three different types and 50 cm in diameter were also piled up there.
7. The Bauunion Firm from Naumburg-Saaleck was working at the field. The construction office had its headquarters in the Buna Plant in Schkopau. (5) On 26 August 1951, about 1,200 workers were employed at the installation. On 8 September, an estimated 1,000 men were employed. The local labor office was advised to recommend the workers to volunteer for work at Schkeuditz airfield scheduled to start on 1 September 1951. This airfield was to be improved in the same way as Herscberg airfield. (6)
8. On 8 September, only one day shift of eight hours was worked. The terrain near the western boundary of the field was being leveled with the western end of the runway. Five power shovels were utilized for this purpose. Two pits were being excavated north of the runway. Many workers were working on the construction of lanes connecting the runway and taxiway.
9. Undestroyed hangars No 3 and 5 and the repair hangar were empty. (7) The armament shop had been removed from the field. On the night of 1 to 2 September, the Volkspolizei unit at the field was replaced by 700 to 1,000 air force troops. After 2 September, only air force guards were observed. [REDACTED] (8) After arrival of the Soviet Air Force troops in the airfield barracks installation, the road to Knapendorf which crossed the area between the airfield and the barracks installation was detoured. The kilometer markers of the section of this road from its intersection with August-Bebel-Strasse as far as the branch off point to Knapendorf were removed and the trees were cut there.

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Comments.

- (1) For layout sketch of airfield, see Annex 1. For panoramic view of the entire airfield area, see Annex 2. The photograph was taken on 18 May 1951 from the southwestern corner of the field, marked as point A on the layout sketch. The taxiway, item 2 on sketch, runs parallel to the field path which is discernible on the right half of photograph. The taxiway was not yet under construction at the time when the photograph was taken.
- (2) The thickness of the concrete layer is believed to be too high. At all other airfields of the Twenty-fourth Air Army which have been improved the concrete cover was from 15 to 20 thick.
- (3) The concrete has a mixture ratio of about 1:4 or 5; since very good Portland cement was used the concrete was suitable for covering the runway.
- (4) The purpose of the pipe system is not clear. It is considered probable that this pipe system formerly existed and had no connection with the airfield.
- (5) This information is believed to be correct. The Bauunion is possibly located in Saaleck near Naumburg.
- (6) Improvement at Schkeuditz airfield with the help of laborers from Herscberg was confirmed by two other sources. The date for the beginning of improvement in Schkeuditz is unknown.
- (7) For undestroyed hangars No 3 and 5, see items 16 and 18 on Annex 1, and Annex 4. Annex 4 was taken from point 7 on Annex 1. For repair hangar, see Item 14 on Annex 1.
- (8) The unit which arrived at the field is probably the ground unit of the formation which is to be transferred to Herscberg airfield. The motor vehicle number does not indicate the type of the unit.

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